



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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## **Carnegie Medal to be Awarded to Damian Bell for Extraordinary Civilian Heroism**

**PLEASANT HILL, Iowa** – On Tuesday, March 28 at 6:30 p.m., Damian Bell will be awarded a CARNEGIE MEDAL from Mayor Sara Kurovski during a Pleasant Hill City Council meeting after saving the life of Richard G. Rauzi. Bell is one of 93 recipients to receive a medal during 2016 on behalf of the CARNEGIE HERO FUND COMMISSION.

Damian Bell and his son Konnor Bell, both Pleasant Hill residents helped to save Richard G. Rauzi from drowning in Indianola on February 14, 2016. Rauzi was snowshoeing on ice atop Lake Ahquabi near an area of open water when the ice broke beneath him, plunging him into the frigid water. Rauzi was unable to lift himself back onto solid ice, so he began yelling for help. Across the lake, Konnor Bell heard the shouts and alerted his father. Bell drove around the lake to access the closer bank and took a 17-foot canoe and rope onto the ice and skirted the open water to rescue Rauzi. As Bell reached for Rauzi, the front of the canoe broke through the ice, but he was unable to lift him aboard. He was able to help him hold onto one of the seats and secured him to the canoe with the rope. Bell then stepped from the canoe onto solid ice and attempted to pull Rauzi from the open water with the rope, but again his efforts were not successful. Bell was quickly tiring due to the 20-degree air temperature and that is when firefighters arrived on the scene. They launched a rescue boat, made their way across the open water, and with help from Bell, who entered the boat, took Rauzi aboard. Others on the bank used a rope to pull the boat to safety. Rauzi was hospitalized and treated for hypothermia, but recovered in two days.

“It is an honor to be able to recognize Damian Bell with this prestigious medal,” said Mayor Sara Kurovski. “Damian and Konnor are true heroes for saving the life of Richard G. Rauzi. Their quick response and reactions helped ensure the outcome was a positive one. We are truly lucky to have them as residents in Pleasant Hill.”

Damian Bell is one of the 93 medal recipients during 2016. Since the Pittsburgh-based Fund's inception in 1904, 9,914 recipients have been recognized. Each of the recipients or their survivors also receive a financial grant. Throughout the 112 years since the Fund was established by industrialist-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, \$38.7 million has been given in one-time grants, scholarship aid, death benefits, and continuing assistance.

“As I reflect back upon that cold day in February, I’m thankful my son heard Rauzi yell for help,” said Pleasant Hill resident, Damian Bell. “I knew quickly what I had to attempt to do in order to help save his life. As I approached the side of the lake where he was at, I was thankful to see a canoe and a rope. The seconds that it took to get to him, felt more like minutes. With the challenge of frigid temperatures and the ice, I was thankful when rescue crews arrived to assist. I am grateful for the recognition from the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission and the City of Pleasant Hill.”

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